



Action
by
Christians
against
torture

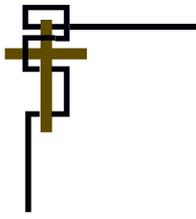
'A Powerhouse of Prayer'

acat - opposing torture - promoting compassion

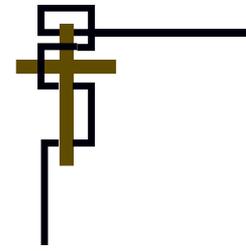
February/March 2007

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Chairman's Letter



Dear friends,

If it's not too late to say it, "Happy New Year to you all!" Last time I wrote about Christmas and by now most of us have probably packed Christmas away till next year. Certainly our tree is outside in the garden sitting defiantly - and still growing - in its bucket, that's if the wind hasn't blown it away!

But the Church continues the Christmas season through Epiphany until Candlemas, when we remember how Mary and Joseph took the child Jesus to the temple, where he was greeted by Simeon and Anna. It was Simeon who recognised the child for who he was and spoke those words that have come down to us through the centuries, known as the *Nunc Dimittis*: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace..."

A while ago I spoke of the need for us all to recognise each other's humanity. I referred to the crucifixion of Jesus, to his trial scene where Pilate paraded Jesus before the crowd who were demanding his execution. Pilate said to the crowd about Jesus, "behold the man." I said then that it is only by failing to recognise the humanity of others, by dehumanising others and themselves that torturers are able to carry out their painful, degrading and humiliating activities.

The scene at the temple where Simeon takes Jesus into his arms to bless him starts the other way round. Here Simeon doesn't just accept the humanity of Jesus, he recognises his divinity. Here wrapped in human flesh is the one who saves, the Messiah, the Son of God. And Simeon blesses the One who he probably would have preferred to be blessed by; just as John the Baptist is later to baptize the One by whom he would rather have been baptized.

The Candlemas scene in the temple is a reminder that we are to recognise the Christ in ourselves and in others. There is not one person for whom Christ didn't give his life, as John 3:16 tells us. And Paul tells us in Colossians 1:27 that the great secret of the Christian faith is "Christ in us".

I pray that God will give us all the strength we need for the tasks that lie ahead this year, and especially for all that we will try to do on behalf of others who are being tortured even now, as you read this. As we seek to put Kingdom values into practice may we recognise the Christ within us all and know that in serving others in his name, we are serving him.

May God's peace be with you and with all for whom you pray.

With every good wish for 2007,

Tom Bayliss

U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture: Statement to the General Assembly.

Manfred Nowak, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, gave a challenging report to the General Assembly a few months ago. His is one of the key jobs in the U.N. towards the elimination of torture and other cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment. His mandate is worldwide.

Here are the main points:

- There is an international lack of awareness about the seriousness of torture: that it is one of the gravest of human rights violations.
- All 141 States parties to the UN Convention Against Torture undertook to criminalise torture, but it is astonishing that the majority of States parties have not found it necessary to take legislative measures. Therefore law enforcement officials did not understand that torture is a serious crime.
- He strongly advocates against the use of diplomatic assurances to get round the principle of non-refoulement (transporting suspects to secret places of detention where torture may occur.)
- So-called 'secret evidence', possibly obtained by torture, is being used increasingly in Court hearings, in spite of the principle of non-admissibility of evidence extracted by torture set out in Article 15 of the UN Convention Against Torture.
- The principle in Article 15 is further undermined by the onerous burden of proof which is placed on defendants to establish that evidence was obtained under torture, rather than on the prosecution to show that it was not.
- The Prohibition of torture is absolute and states risk violating this prohibition by effectively allowing evidence obtained under torture to be judicially admissible. (The House of Lords has ruled that such evidence cannot be admitted in English Courts.)
- **Country visits.**

During 2005 Manfred Nowak visited Georgia, Mongolia, Nepal and China. Each of them willingly opened themselves up to objective international scrutiny with the aim of combating torture.

Up to October 2006 the Special Rapporteur had visited only Jordan. He gathered clear evidence of torture in various investigative and correctional places. This was supported by 'unambiguous identification of the responsible officers'.

He was supposed to visit several republics in the Russian Federation last October, including Chechnya and Ingushetia. However, five days before his visit, he was told that he would not be allowed to carry out unannounced visits to detention centres or to hold private interviews with detainees. He had been granted these facilities in the other countries mentioned above.

➤ **Future Visits.**

Manfred Nowak visited Paraguay in November 2006 and Sri Lanka at the end of January 2007. He has arranged to visit Nigeria and Togo in April and June 2007 and Indonesia in the latter part of the year. All these visits are to establish whether or not torture and breaches of human rights are taking place and to emphasise the absolute ban on torture.

Continued on page 11

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS FROM ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

On December 9th 2006 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted this Convention. It is now open for ratification. This is very good news. In 1992 the UN adopted a declaration on enforced disappearances but this was not legally binding. In 1994 the Organisation of American States adopted an Inter-American Convention on the forced disappearance of persons - this had only regional scope.

A draft convention was produced in 1996 but the international community then focussed on the Statutes of the International Criminal Court in which Disappearances are set forth as a crime against humanity. The Rome Treaty was adopted in 1998.

Negotiations were re-launched in 2001 after successful pressure from families' organisations and human rights groups. The new negotiations focussed on participation from NGO's and only addressed the issue of disappearances. It deals with the many gaps in the existing international legal safeguards and has resulted in improvements in relevant international law. “

The Convention - The Provisions

- The crime of enforced disappearances to be incorporated into domestic penal law
- Statutes of limitation should favour victims
- Improved international co-operation between states
- Guarantee the right of families to know the truth
- Preventive measures should be put in place
- The right to reparation should be guaranteed
- The stopping of child adoption that result from disappearance

The Convention provides for two new human rights:

- the right not to be disappeared
- The right of victims to know the truth

It also provides -

- Stronger guarantees concerning detention
- Far reaching rights of victims to reparation
- The setting up of a monitoring body - *The Committee on Disappearances*.

ACAT has over the years taken up many cases of enforced disappearances. We hope this very important Convention will be ratified by many countries and ensure that effective action is taken to bring to justice those who take part in disappearances and hopefully reduce its occurrence.

We hope to include an article about enforced disappearances in a future edition of the Newsletter.

APPEALS FOR FEBRUARY/MARCH

PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF ANDREI ZATOKA, TURKMENISTAN

Andrei Zatoka, 50, an environmentalist, has dual Russian and Turkmenistan citizenship. He moved from the Russian Federation in 1982 and worked at Kaplankyr National Park until 1992; he is a member of the council of the International Social and Ecological Union and co-chaired the Dashoguz Ecological club until its forced closure in 2003. He was arrested on 17 December at Dashoguz airport - he had arranged to go to Moscow for a meeting of the International Social and Ecological Union and to visit his family. He was charged on 4 January with the unlawful acquisition or possession of weapons or explosives and unlawful circulation of potent or poisonous substances. There is a fear of torture or ill-treatment. Activists, such as Andrei Zatoka, have frequently been arrested, interrogated, harassed by the authorities, imprisoned, tortured, and ill-treated. A number have been forced into exile.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:

Acting President of Turkmenistan, Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, Presidential Palace, 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. (Dear Acting President)

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashit Meredov, Magtymguly Avenue 83, 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan Email - mfatm@online.tm (Dear Minister)

Copies can be sent to:-

The Ambassador, The Embassy of Turkmenistan, 2nd Floor South, St. George's House, 14/17 Wells Street, London W1P 3FP

SUGGESTED DRAFTLETTER:

I wish to express my very great concern over the arrest on 17 December of ANDREI ZATOKA, aged 50, an environmentalist with dual Russian and Turkmenistani nationality. I understand that he has been charged with the unlawful acquisition or possession of weapons or explosives and unlawful circulation of potent or poisonous substances.

There is concern that he has been targeted because of his peaceful work as an environmentalist and may be a prisoner of conscience, detained for peacefully expressing his right to freedom of expression. May I call for his immediate and unconditional release. I would like to point out that Turkmenistan is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to freedom of association and expression.

I urge the authorities to ensure that, while in custody, he is not subjected to torture or ill-treatment and is given immediate access to his family and his lawyer.

I wish to express my concern over the ongoing clampdown on dissent in Turkmenistan, resulting in the detention, torture and ill-treatment of many peaceful activists, political dissidents, members of religious minority groups, and their families.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully



PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF RUKIYA IBRAGIMOVA, KYRGYZSTAN

This is a second appeal

On July 20 Rukiya Ibragimova, 20, pregnant, was arrested, held in the isolation ward of Temporary Allowance in Jalal-abad and beaten by a police officer, in order to force her to denounce her husband Djamaliddin Abderashitov. She was then taken to Kyzyl-Jar psychiatric hospital where she was severely beaten again on 26 August. She was taken to Tash-Kumyr city hospital where she had a miscarriage. Her husband surrendered to the police when he learned of his wife's torture. She is still held in the psychiatric hospital, has not received adequate medical care and has had not access to a lawyer. Because she is considered insane, she has not been allowed to lodge a complaint against the chief of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs, Kubanychbek Torobaev, for her torture and ill-treatment at the time of her arrest and at the Kyzyl-Jar Hospital.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika, 72003 g. Bishkek, Prospekt chuy, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr Bakiev Kurmanbek Salievich, Republic of Kyrgyzstan

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER

It was with very great concern that I learned of the continued detention in Kyzyl-Jar psychiatric hospital of RUKIYA IBRAGIMOVA, aged 20. I understand that she was arrested on July 20 last year, was severely beaten in the isolation ward of Temporary Allowance in Jalal-abad and also when she was transferred to Kyzyl-Jar psychiatric hospital. She consequently lost the baby she was expecting.

May I call for her immediate release unless valid criminal charges are brought against her. If such charges are brought, may I appeal for a fair trial in accordance with international standards.

I understand that she had not received adequate medical care. May I urgently request that she is given suitable medical treatment.

I have particular concern that because she has been diagnosed as insane, she has not been allowed to lodge a complaint against the chief of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs, Kubanychbek Torobaev, for her torture and ill-treatment. May I call for an immediate and impartial investigation into the allegations made against him, the publication of its findings, and his prosecution in a court of law, together with any others found to be responsible.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully



PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF KO WIN KO AND PHYOE ZAW LATT, MYANMAR

Ko Win Ko and Phyo Zaw Latt were human rights activists in Moenyo Township, Bago division, central Myanmar. They were arrested at Letpadan rail station on October 6 2006. When they were searched a petition calling for the release of a group of political prisoners was found. They were taken to Letpadan Township police station where Ko Win Ko was charged with resisting arrest and illegal gambling - the police claimed they had found illegal lottery ticket stubs. He was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on 18 October. Phyo Zaw Latt was released without charge but immediately rearrested. Both were then charged with "deceit" and "forgery" and on November 9 were both sentenced to 14 years in prison by the Tharawaddy Township Court. They had no legal representation and their families were not informed of the hearing.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:

Mr Aye Maung, Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, 101 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar (Dear Attorney General)

Maj.Gen. Maung Oo, Minister for Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, No 10 Naypyidaw, Yangon, Myanmar. (Dear Minister)

Copies can be sent to:-

The Ambassador, The Embassy of Myanmar, 19A Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London W1X 8ER (Your Excellency)

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:

It was with very great concern that I learned of the arrest of KO WIN KO and PHYOE ZAW LATT, human rights activists at the Letpadan rail station, Moenyo Township, Bago Division, central Myanmar on October 6, 2006. Ko Win Ko was charged with resisting arrest and illegal gambling and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on 18 October. On November 9 both Ko Win Ko and Phyo Zaw Latt were sentenced to 14 years by the Tharawaddy Township Court, having been found guilty of deceit and forgery.

May I urgently call for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that while imprisoned they are not subjected to torture or ill-treatment. May I ask that they be held in conditions which comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and are given immediate access to their relatives, their lawyers and to any medical treatment they may need.

May I call for their immediate release. It would seem that they were arrested because of their human rights work. From what I have learned they were given an unfair summary trial without access to a lawyer and with their families unaware of their arrest, trial and sentence.

I respectfully call for an immediate end to reprisals against human rights defenders in Myanmar.

Yours respectfully or Yours faithfully



**PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF BISHAR AL RAWI, JAMMA AL-BANNA,
PLUS 7 OTHER UK RESIDENTS, HELD IN GUANTANAMO**

Bisher al-Rawi, an Iraqi national and Jamma al-Banna, a Jordanian refugee, both UK residents, were on a business trip to Gambia in 2002, when they were arrested and interrogated by Gambian intelligence officers. They were then handed over to US agents who secretly flew them to Afghanistan and then to Guantanamo. During a High Court challenge to the UK's refusal to petition the US authorities for the release of these men, documents were provided by the security forces suggesting that either directly or indirectly information was given to the Gambian authorities, which was later passed on to the US and led to their rendition to Afghanistan. The UK continues to deny any complicity. The challenge was denied but the UK Government has entered into negotiations with the US but is still not demanding their release. They have now been held for 5 years and have still not been charged or brought to trial

They have both been subjected to numerous beatings. Bisher has suffered broken ribs and a broken foot and received no medical treatment for his injuries. The use of stress positions, temperature extremes, extreme sleep deprivation, death threats, threats to their families, and at times starvation and being denied water fit to drink are commonly used. Bisher al-Rawi has now been in isolation for more than nine months - he has been interrogated hundreds of times and finally refused to take part in any further interrogations. His lawyer reports that he is on the verge of a complete mental breakdown. There is very great concern that if he slips into madness, it will be permanent.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO YOUR MP - mention that you are a member of ACAT, a registered charity, a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and affiliated to the International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture.

ADDRESS: The House of Commons, London SW1

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:

I am writing to ask you to express my very great concern to the appropriate Government Department (Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary) over the continued detention of BISHAR AL-RAWI, JAMIL AL-BANNA and seven other UK residents in Guantanamo. Bisher al-Rawi has, according to reputable information, been subjected to particularly harsh and brutal treatment and is on the verge of a complete mental breakdown.

They have now been held under inhumane conditions for 5 years, without any charge being laid against them and with no hope of either release or a fair trial in the near future.

Will you take up my concern and call for the British Government to press the United States for the immediate release of Bisher Al-Rawi, Jamma al-Banna and the other 7 UK residents. May I also ask that they be returned to this country and not sent back to their country of origin, where they are likely to suffer imprisonment, torture or even death.

Yours sincerely

Do please feel free to write your own letter or to alter and add if you want to this appeal. The more pressure that is put on our Government the more likely it is to result in a "happy" outcome. Do make sure that you add in the last sentence of the appeal as set out above. "The Government has said that it would ensure that Omar Deghayes, if released would be sent back to Libya, where because of the murder of his father who was a leading opponent of the regime, he would be imprisoned and probably killed. "

PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF THARES SODSRI, THAILAND

Thares Sodsri, a prominent environmental activist in Ban Kha District, Rachaburi province disappeared on December 1st from his home. His disappearance was reported by his housemaid. Police searching the house, found traces of blood, used handgun cartridges, two bullets and tyre prints on the front lawn. His wife stated that their three dogs had been poisoned a few days previously. The police raided several locations and took away a blood stationed truck and clothes.

Thares Sodsri had conducted a campaign against illegal forest encroachment projects in the Ban Kha area for ten years and had led villagers to protect their forest from local influential people. Two weeks before his disappearance he had submitted to the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment a video showing illegal forest destruction by a local political leader in Ratchaburi, which is under a royally-initiated project for forest protection. He was also due to testify in court against several people charged with forest encroachment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

Mr Pachara Yutidhammadamrong, Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, Lukmuang Building, Nahuppei Road, Prabaromrachawang, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. Email: ag@ago.go.th (Dear Attorney General)

Mr Charnchai Likjitta, Interim Minister of Justice, Office of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, 22nd Floor Software Park Building, Chaeng Wattana Road, Pakkred, Nonthaburi, Bangkok 11120, Thailand. Email: ommoj@moj.go.th (Dear Interim Minister of Justice)

Copies can be sent to:-

The Ambassador, The Embassy of Thailand, 29-30 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JP (Your Excellency)

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:

I have learned with very great concern of the disappearance of THARES SODSRI, a prominent environmental activist in Ban Kha district, Rachaburi Province on November 30 2006 from his home. I understand that traces of blood, used handgun cartridges, two bullets, and tyre marks on the front lawn were found at his home by the police. There are reports that there have been raids on several locations and that various items were removed for forensic examination. I have not yet heard of any arrests in this case.

Thares Sodsri had submitted a video to the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment showing illegal forest destruction by a local political leader in Ratchaburi, which is under a royally-initiated project for forest protection. He was also due to testify in a court case against several defendants in a forest encroachment case.

May I call for action is taken by the police to ascertain whether Thares Sodsri is alive or whether he has been murdered because of his ten year campaign against illegal logging. May I ask that all efforts be made to locate his body if it is considered he has been killed.

I urge that every effort is made to ensure that those responsible for his disappearance and possible murder are arrested and brought to justice, even if they are leading members of the community.

I call for the protection of those who campaign against illegal logging and other forest environmental encroachments in Thailand.

Yours faithfully or Your respectfully

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

ANDREI ZATOKA, TURKMENISTAN, 50 An environmentalist with dual Russian and Turkmenistani citizenship, member of the International Social and Ecological Union; he co-chaired the Dashoguz Ecological Club, forcibly closed in 2003; arrested 17 December - he had arranged to go to a meeting in Moscow and to see his family; he is charged with firearms, explosive and poisonous substances offences.

OFUKIYA IBRAGIMOVA, 20, KYRGYZSTAN (Second appeal) Arrested in July, held in isolation ward of Temporary Allowance in Jalal-abad; beaten to force her to denounce her husband; taken to psychiatric hospital and beaten again; lost baby; she is still held in the psychiatric hospital and has not received suitable medical care and has not been allowed to make a complaint about her beatings etc.

KO WIN KO AND PHYOE ZAW LATT, MYANMAR Human rights activists, in Moenyo township, Bago division, arrested at Letpadan railway station in October; a petition calling for the release of political prisoners was found on them when they were searched; there was a travesty of a trial and they were sentenced to 14 years imprisoned on charges of "forgery" and "deceit" in November.

THARES SODSRI, THAILAND A prominent environmentalist in Ban Kha district, Rachaburi province, disappeared on December 1 from his home; he had conducted a campaign against illegal logging and forest encroachment projects for 10 years and was due to testify in a court case; it is highly likely that he was abducted and murdered; pray for his family and for his killers to be found and brought to justice.

9 UK RESIDENTS HELD IN GUANTANAMO, PARTICULARLY BISHAR AL-RAWI, JAMMA AL-BANNA, OMAR DEGHAYES Have now been held for 5 years without charge or trial; conditions are very harsh; Bishar al-Rawi has been held in isolation for more than 9 months and is reportedly on the verge of a total mental breakdown; pray that the UK Government will press the US for their immediate release and their return to the UK rather than to their countries of origin, where they could well be tortured and possibly killed.

Bruges Training Conference 2007 taken from the FIACAT website

This year, the annual European Seminar had taken place from the 15 September to the 17 September at the Benedictine Abbey of Sint-Andries, near Bruges.

► Content and aim of the Seminar

During the first part of the programme, focused on the theme of the 2007 International Seminar : *"The ban on torture, a principle under threat"*. This benefited from the presentations delivered by Eric Prokosch, a former member of the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, and Marie-Jo Cocher, FIACAT's Executive Secretary. We discussed in depth about what we is our understanding of the fight against terrorism and its consequences on the ban on torture.

With the 2007 International Council in view, the second part of the programme was a discussion on the general situation of FIACAT as well as its aims and its goals. On the Sunday morning, we went back on the activities and tasks of both FIACAT and the ACATs, we shared information and assessed action that we have taken at international and regional levels.

The seminar aim was to meet, talk and share experiences between members of the European's ACATs. Richard Dent attended this conference on our behalf.

Fund Raising Ideas

Many of our members have good ideas about how to raise funds for organisations. It would be good if we had a pool of ideas which could be passed on to our members to enable them to fund raise in a 'fun' way and also to help us to spread the word about acatuk and to get more members as a result.

Ideas which have proved good so far are:

Having a stall at a fete, coffee mornings, freedom feasts, candle lighting services, Christmas card writing sessions, Christmas tree festival, why not sponsor a tree? Steve Goddard undertook sponsored walks and raised thousands (although I wouldn't advise many of our members to do similar!!). What about short sponsored events. We can supply speakers if you would like to hold a talk of some sort.

If you have held fund raising events why not write a short article for us with photos if possible. These could then be included in our mailing and may give you some suggestions which you could use

If you have good ideas about fund raising and raising our profile let us have them

Please let us know - so that we can let you know

U.N.Special Rapporteur on Torture Cont'd from page 3

➤ Torture Prevention.

The report states " I maintain that the best way to combat torture is to focus efforts on preventing it from taking place. For prevention to be most effective, these efforts must be carried out locally, by independent national institutions."

He therefore strongly promotes the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. This gives national human rights organisations the right to carry out unannounced visits to all places of detention at any time, to conduct private interviews with all detainees and to subject them to a thorough independent medical examination.

➤ The Special Rapporteur ends his report:

' Only through the benefit of co-operation with Governments, national organizations and civil society, as well as regional human rights organizations, can the mandate of the Special rapporteur expect to make a real contribution to the elimination of torture and ill-treatment."

POSTSCRIPT .

ACAT (UK) is a 'regional organization' within that definition and we hope that all members will endorse what Manfred Nowak strives to do.

Richard Dent

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT PLANNING THE HOLDING OF A SERVICE TO MARK
UN TORTURE VICTIMS' DAY (26th June) OR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (10th December)?**

Ecumenical Service sheets are available from the Office

Also available from the Office - The Way of the Cross - a service suitable for Good Friday - this is mainly Bible readings, other readings and prayer taken from The Way of the Cross -Let My People Go, by Michael Evans, with poems from Selected Poems of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, readings from Sheila Cassidy, prayers from Bread of Tomorrow, etc.

This was compiled and used for many years by members of the Saltash ACAT Group and usually took place in a members' home without a minister present. A large rough wooden cross was laid on a coffee table on cooking foil in the middle of a circle of worshippers; a large candle was placed in the middle with small candles placed on the limbs of the cross. The final act of the service was the lighting of the candles - the large one first with the others being lit from it in remembrance of individuals and groups suffering torture, the threat of torture, disappearance etc and other abuses. The service lasts for about 40 minutes.

If you can arrange for the service to take place in church with a minister present so much the better.

Diary Date

AGM 13th October 2007 at Broadmead Baptist Church, Bristol

Last year's AGM was very poorly attended.

This year we have our Speakers already booked. Craig Murray - former Ambassador to Uzbekistan and a spokesperson from the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture have agreed to come and talk to us about their work.

We do need a good attendance as Craig Murray is a very busy person and we are very lucky to have been able to book him. Please come and support ACAT. We are also extending an invitation to other like minded organisations and to other ACAT's.

Also, as said previously we are, and will be very short of Committee members. Richard Dent is retiring as Publicity Officer and Margaret Russell is stepping down as Treasurer.

Put the date in your Diaries now and also please give the Committee situation your prayerful consideration.

PRISONER SUPPORT NOTES.

May I first, on behalf of the men in Zambia to whom donations were recently sent, thank all those members who contributed so generously.

I know that one or two of our members correspond with prisoners in Egypt, and I am very sorry to report that the most recent newsletter that I have received from the Christian Prisoners' Support Network states that Father Monir Barsome, who was such a great help in channelling funds to men in that Country, passed away suddenly on the 6th December. I will be happy to provide details to any member who may wish to send funds to prisoners in Egypt through the CPSN, to the Network itself, for the Gift Aiding of such donations, or in relation to beadwork requirements.

I will be sending members' donations to Father Bohan at 3 monthly intervals this year, as usual, and I should be glad to receive cheques made out to 'ACAT No. 2 A/c' by the following dates,

February 21st
May 23rd
August 22nd
November 21st

Please, to allow time for clearance for the transfer dates at the end of the relevant month:

As I have mentioned previously, Father Bohan will advise each prisoner of the name of the person from whom the funds have been received unless I am requested to ensure that a donation is sent anonymously

I will be happy to receive any donations for the benefit of Alan John Davies, as has been mentioned previously. Please make cheques payable to 'ACAT No. 2 A/c', and indicate in a covering note, or on the back of your cheque that the funds are to be used for John's benefit.

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, I would like to update my records so that I have an accurate list of the prisoners being supported, and by whom, and I should be glad if those members who correspond with a prisoner overseas could let me have the following details by the end of March:

1. The member's name and address.
2. The name(s) and address of the prisoner(s) who is or are being supported.
3. If financial support is being provided through an agency other than ACAT, such as Penwork Ministries.
4. Any comments that you may wish to make concerning any aspect of your correspondence.

If you wish to do so, please provide the details that I have requested by e-mail.

Thank you in advance for your help.

If I can be of assistance in any way concerning this important aspect of our work, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kenneth Watson, 34, Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SF, tel. 0118 950 9047.

E-mail acatuk2004@yahoo.com fao Prisoner Support Scheme

From the Treasurer

At the Committee meeting held in November it was reluctantly agreed that the time had come when it was necessary to increase subscriptions.

acatuk subscriptions have not changed for t 10 years. During that time we have been able to cope with the increases in the costs of mailings to our members and the general increases in administration and running costs such as telephone, printing and researching cases. Although we do have funds, looking at the budget for the forthcoming year we feel that to give an efficient service to our members and to continue with the work we do we have to increase the subscriptions.

Therefore as from the 1st April 2007 the following changes will be applied to new subscriptions and membership renewals

Individual membership	£20
Students/retired/unwaged	£10
Groups	£50
Life membership	£250 (no increase)

If you feel that you have a real difficulty in paying the increase please do contact me to discuss the situation.

I would ask all who pay by Standing Order (these members are identified by a small 'S' on the address label) to contact their Banks to amend their payment. Or to contact me to request a new Standing Order form.

If you would like to start paying by Standing Order which is the simplest and most cost efficient way of paying please contact me at the address on the last page of this mailing. I will then forward a form by return.

Another way you can help us to reduce our administration outgoings is if you have computer facilities or access to a computer why not receive your mailing by e mail. This means that you receive it early, can print off copies for other people and distribute appeals easily.

Margaret Russell

Membership

We have always been a small organisation but in recent months our membership numbers have decreased to the extent that we could be in danger of not being a viable organisation in 4/5 years time.

I am therefore enclosing with this mailing a copy of our main leaflet which I would ask you to pass on to someone whom you feel could be interested in joining us. Or, passing it to your Church leadership team so that they can advertise acatuk in the newsheets or magazines.

If every member found a new memebr then clearly the numbers would increase 100 fold. If those new members then found another new member then we would be able to grow into the sort of organistation which can make things happen by weight of sher 'number power'

Please help those who need your help and support by enrolling a anew member.

Margaret Russell

Prayer and Reflection

“Seek good, not evil, that you may live. **Almighty God,**
Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.” **Amos**
5:14

Lord, our God,
whose life of prayer on earth
has lit a flame of hope
which cannot die;
Deliver us now from the fear
of your burning love,
that in giving ourselves
to the fire of your Spirit,
our prayers may become
effective action,
shining with your tenderness
and purpose;
through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Lord,
we pray for all who suffer
at the hands of others;
we pray for all who deliberately inflict
suffering on others;
bless the letters we write and those
who receive them,
that in the darkness of all people
a light may shine that can never be
put out. Amen.

Almighty God,
in mystery you created all things;
you made us in your own image;
you love us with an everlasting love.
Grant us the assurance of your loving
presence with us now.
Bear us gently in your gracious hands,
and bring us in our sorrow
the comfort for which our hearts cry
out;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

your Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross;
Give us faith to perceive his glory,
that being strengthened by his grace
we may be changed into his likeness,
from glory to glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lord, we give you thanks,
that even though Jesus was your Son,
he learned obedience through suffering
and is able to help those
who are in the midst of their trial
to overcome evil and grow in grace.
Amen.

We are placed on this earth together,
like flowers placed in a vase.
Lord, help us to acknowledge
our common humanity,
and the generosity of your love
given in Christ Jesus our Lord,
that together we may all draw
from the same life-giving waters,
and make the earth beautiful
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
you are the light of the minds that know
you and the joy of loving hearts.
Grant that the life of your Church on
earth may be so loving,
the wisdom of its leaders so pure,
the lives of its members so winning,
that the power of your gospel
may shine through
and be known in all the world,
and your love be for ever adored;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“A Final Thought”

True peace is not merely the
absence of tension,

it is the presence of justice"

-Martin Luther King Jr.

We hope you have found this mailing rewarding and challenging.

Articles are always welcome. It is particularly good to hear what you have been doing to work for the tortured or to promote ACAT in your neighbourhood or further a field, or any items of good news.

Your general comments on this newsletter or on ACAT (UK) would also be valued.

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Material for the next mailing
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